

CA1
J 800
-83P57



3 1761 11764901 2

CONFRONTING PORNOGRAPHY
(WITH A DISCUSSION ON PROSTITUTION)

Government
Publications

CAI
J800
-83P 57

CONFRONTING PORNOGRAPHY

(With a Discussion on Prostitution)

presented to

The Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution

by the

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

May 1984

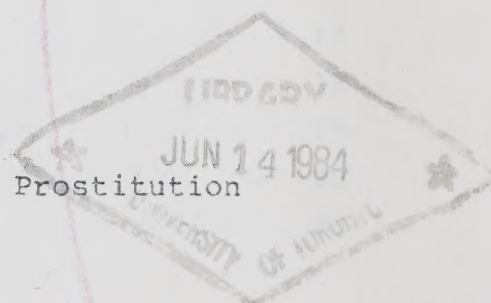


Table of Contents

Pornography: What is it?	1
Who consumes pornography?	4
Effects of pornography	5
On consumers	6
On women	7
On children	8
What Do We Do?	9
Education	11
Legislative and Legal Action	13
Criminal Code	13
Broadcasting Regulations	17
N.B. Human Rights Code	18
N.B. Attorney General's Office	19
Provincial Regulation	20
Municipal Regulation	20
Prostitution - a discussion	21
Conclusion	23
Footnotes	25
Appendix	26
Select Bibliography	28

Pornography: What is it?

As has been pointed out in numerous discussions on pornography, the word is derived from the Greek words "porne" meaning prostitute and "graphos" meaning writing or depicting. Literally, then, it is material which describes prostitution - the sale of women's bodies (or the bodies of young children and young men) to men.¹ This root meaning reveals the basic elements of pornography: "the commoditization of female sexuality"² - the male definition or control of female sexuality, the male use of another's body for self entertainment.

Erotic, pornography is not. This male confining or control of female sexuality through male definition, male description, is the absolute antithesis of erotica. As its derivation from the name Eros, the god of sexual love, suggests, erotica portrays - celebrates - sexual love, connotes reciprocity, mutual caring, desire and respect, the true and free choice to participate - the equality in being - of sex partners.

If we examine pornography, we note numerous elements which, presented in either "simulated" or live representations, serve to objectify, demean, degrade or dehumanize the actual participants and the sex or groups of persons those "participants" represent, to celebrate sexual inequality, and the nonexistence of free sexual choice - all in the name of men's entertainment, men's excitement, men's sexual titillation:

1. objectification

- the "participant", almost invariably female and often young, is depicted as being or doing for the voyeur (reader, spectator etc.), not as celebrating sexual experience or attraction with an equal joyful partner;

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761117649012>

2. degradation, humiliation

- with the "participant", the woman or child, reduced to an object anything goes: all manners of physical and psychological abuse imaginable;

3. power imbalance between two or more "participants" and/or the use of power by one or more "participants" over another or others

- a) a power imbalance may be depicted or created through:
 - physical stance or positioning
 - physical strength differences
 - the wielding of a weapon, or of any instrument or a sexual organ (i.e. penis) used as a power symbol and/or to coerce or harm
 - sex differences ("dominant" sex over "inferior" or "weaker" sex)
 - race differences ("dominant" race over an "inferior" race, as ascertained from the context of the representation or from the larger social context)
 - socio-economic or professional class differences
 - age differences (e.g. adult to minor, or minor to the adult voyeur, reader or spectator)
 - unequal nudity (the nude or partial nude before the clothed or more clothed expresses the former's vulnerability and inherent inequality)
 - psychological, physical or verbal abuse (thus diminishing or degrading the recipient of the abuse)

- b) - power abuse is the advocacy and/or the use of a power imbalance to coerce, to force an act of or on another for self ends
 - e.g. any of the listed power imbalances used for entertainment, sexual or otherwise, or in the representation or forcing of a sexual act.

4. victim masochism; abuser sadism

- the victim, virtually always female, is portrayed as enjoying, even inviting, the abuse done to her, the degradation, the humiliation, the violence;
- the abuser, virtually always male, is portrayed as enjoying abusing the victim, enjoying her pain, her humiliation.

5. advocacy or endorsement of the listed elements - objectification, degradation, power imbalance and abuse, victim masochism, abuser sadism.

The very fact that the producers and sellers of such representations label, promote and sell them as "men's" or "adult entertainment" (i.e. as something that will entertain, amuse or sexually excite - ultimately benefit - the buyer-voyeur), implies their endorsement of the product, its message and effects.

Note: Whether the "participant" "agreed" or not to produce pornographic representations in no way alters or diminishes their message.

A legal definition

For legal purposes how would we define pornography? We believe Jillian Ridington's definition to be the most comprehensive and clear to date. We therefore define pornography as:

a presentation or representation whether live, simulated, verbal, pictorial, filmed, video-taped or otherwise represented, of sexual behaviour in which one or more participants are coerced overtly, or implicitly into participation; or are injured or abused physically or psychologically; or in which an imbalance of power is obvious, or implied by virtue of the immature age of any participant or by contextual aspects of the presentation, and in which such behaviour can be taken to be advocated or endorsed.³

Who consumes pornography?

Men are the predominant consumers of pornography. The existence of Playgirl, often presented as an example of women's consumption of pornography, does not have a wide female readership. Its relatively small circulation and its heavy male following attest to that fact.⁴

We speculate that there are at least two groups of male consumers of pornography:

1. Those for whom pornography confirms or endorses their socially-inculcated views of women, women's roles, sexuality and male-female relationships; (pornographic representations are "exciting" or "erotic" for these men because they refuse to

question and examine those very perceptions; because of their, if not overt, at least passive acceptance of sexual inequality, of male dominance-superiority/ female submission-inferiority, as social and sexual norms).

2. Those for whom pornography not only confirms or endorses their socially-inculcated views of women, women's roles, sexuality and male-female relationships but also confirms and/or endorses a reality that they lived or are living, the rightness or wrongness - the humanity - of which they will not question. This group would include consumers who: were abused as children or witnessed the abuse of their mother and who now abuse or desire to abuse others, especially women and children; are hostile - openly or otherwise - to women; are abusive partners; or manifest other abusive anti-social behavior. This group would be at high risk to actively glean ideas from or act out abusive pornographic representations.

Analyzed in this light, the essence of pornography is unmasked. It is together a product, a validation and a perpetuator (as we will see in the discussion on effects) of negative social conditioning.

Effects of pornography

Much has yet to be confirmed regarding the effects of these negative, often hate-filled, representations of women, these false, warped, dehumanized images of sexuality. But we do know enough to be acting on many fronts to regulate and counteract them.

Effects on consumer

The effects of violent pornography have been undergoing rigorous research. It has been found that: viewers of increasingly violent pornography become "desensitized to violence, particularly violence against women"⁵; develop indifferent or callous attitudes to female victims of violence (for example, are more likely to believe rape myths: that the victim deserved, wanted or enjoyed the assault); and are more likely to behave aggressively towards women.⁶

The illogicalness of the catharsis theory has demanded that we reject it totally. As Susan Griffin pointed out the theory says, "pornography excites some behavior but not all behavior"⁷; supposedly it helps men achieve sexual release but does not incite aggression, sexual or otherwise, even when the latter is a characteristic, or the very raison-d'être, of the pornographic representation. As Lise Dunnigan asks, "have we ever proposed that racist films glorifying the lynching of blacks would reduce the growth of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, or that images of child torture should be distributed to abusive parents as a therapeutic measure?"⁸ Reappraisal of studies of the so-called Danish experiment has also refuted claims that the decriminalizing of pornography reduces sexual offences.⁹

Effects on women

The pornographic industry affects women both directly and indirectly - women in the industry and women generally.

By the very nature of the industry itself, female "participants" in pornographic productions highly risk psychological, sexual or physical abuse, have little to no recourse or protection, little to no say in what they are asked to produce. Their powerlessness stems from either the facts: that in "legitimate" enterprises they are not unionized; or that they are workers in an illegitimate or illegal enterprise; or that they are in one sense or another captives. As the larger society labels them as easy, or as deserving or wanting their treatment, and categorizes their work as wrong, immoral or illegitimate, they may suffer such a lessening of self-respect and self-love that their sense of options are severely if not irrevocably limited or destroyed. They are the ultimate victims of a society built on and driven by sexual inequality and sex role labelling.

Indirectly, the pornographic industry affects the entire female population. Elements of pornography - objectification, degradation, endorsement of power imbalance and abuse, female masochism, male sadism are ubiquitous in the media - from films to magazines to ads. Pornography and pornographic elements used for purposes other than the selling of "men's entertainment" (e.g. objectification of a woman to sell a product) adversely affect the way women see themselves, their sexuality, and men. The social norms which have taught women passiveness (which leads to victimization) and objectification (e.g. dressing to attract, just being for another) are reinforced.

Just as pornography negatively affects men's perceptions of women (by reinforcing attitudes and beliefs that women are passive, masochistic, to be possessed), pornography negatively

affects women's perceptions of men (by inciting views that men cannot share sexual experience but want to possess, control or otherwise dehumanize it, that men are sadistic). In short, pornography gets in the way of , if not destroys, true communication between the sexes. As Jillian Ridington states, in doing so pornography "mitigates against true equality and the full participation of women in society, and impedes the liberty of women."¹⁰

Effects on children

As with women, the pornographic industry affects children both directly and indirectly - the children in the industry and children in general.

Due to their immature age, it is impossible for children to make a free or informed choice to "participate" in pornographic productions. As with female "participants", we believe that due to the very nature of this industry, child "participants" face a high risk of and suffer not infrequently from psychological, physical or sexual abuse, have little to no protection from such abuse and no recourse when it does occur. Further they are stripped of the basic right to face and develop their own sexuality at their own pace.

Pornographic representations confront children at every turn, from newspaper movie ads to the corner store magazine rack. We are greatly disturbed about how deeply children's respect and perception of women, of relationships between men and women and of sexuality are thus negatively affected. Knowing that media violence increases aggression in children,¹¹ knowing how successfully advertisements incite children's desire for certain products, their pressuring of their parents into buying, we realize how greatly media representations influence children and how deeply we must be concerned about the negative effects of pornographic representations.

Teaching children healthy attitudes towards their sexuality, fostering their self-respect and respect of others is difficult with ubiquitous displays of pornographic representations. Confronted as they are with such highly negative images at an early age, children are disallowed from facing and developing their sexuality at their own pace. Now with the proliferation of video porn, the risk of early introduction to and the heavy influence of such material has been increased manyfold.

What do we do?

We have defined pornography, looked at its consumers, ascertained its effects. How now must we react to it? What action must we take?

First we must examine the society which produces porn, for no expression occurs in a vacuum. Conformist or rebellious, it is always a product of, or a mirror or reaction to the society from which it came. Pornography is supposedly about men, women and sex. What place do they hold in society?

Women and men. Women and men today are neither socially nor economically on a par. For centuries, perhaps always in civilization as we know it, this inequality, this power imbalance, has existed. As many pornocrats rightly point out, pornography has long been with us; as they neatly omit, so has sexual inequality, sexism and misogyny. As our discussion has well demonstrated, pornography mirrors and celebrates this inequality. In the last twenty-five years the feminist movement has enjoyed a vigorous renaissance. In the past fifteen years violent pornography has proliferated at an alarming rate. The parallel growth patterns are more than just disturbing.

Sex. For all the hullabaloo crying "sexual revolution", "sexual liberation", we live in a sexually confused, sexually anxious

society - the extent to which is only emphasized by the overwhelming sales of sex self-help manuals, by the hot public debates on sexuality. In even the most trusting and loving relationships we have difficulty discussing sexuality frankly, openly and responsibly - parents with their children, partners with each other. As a society we cannot admit to this life force except at best in tittering innuendo or with embarrassment (as in television sitcoms, in advertisements) or at worst with fear, anxiety, admonishment, disgust or pure hate. Sex as a commodity is perhaps more accessible today, but sexual expression as a self-accepted part of one's personality, as a topic of frank, calm, responsible discussion is hardly closer to a reality than it ever was.

Thus, in the wake of a so-called sexual revolution, of absolute free expression with no fore- or afterthought, our general misunderstanding, fear and anxiety regarding sex has coupled with deeply sexist, deeply misogynist, attitudes to create this profitable product we call porn. A multi-million dollar industry has arisen, which in the guise of erotica, exploits and celebrates sexual inequality and feeds on male insecurities regarding female sexuality and women's equality.

What do we do?

We must address sexual inequality.

We must address our sexual anxiety.

And we must address the male anxieties and suppressed rage which incite the production and consumption of pornography, particularly violent pornography.

Education

We must face the reality that sex education is no longer a private matter, for the consequences of sex miseducation, flaunted at every turn and channel switch, are negative and social. We have enumerated many of these consequences in our discussion on the effects of pornography on consumers, women and children. What about the effects of such sex miseducation on adolescents who are just beginning to awake to their sexuality but are receiving no sex education?

Pornography certainly does not explain the consequences of engaging in sex nor teach the necessity of assuming responsibility for those consequences. It does not portray relationships between emotionally mature, responsible, loving and equal partners. In short, it makes negative, highly irresponsible contributions to an adolescent's understanding of sexuality. As a responsible society we must actively counteract with sex education.

Parents are often uncomfortable discussing sexuality with their children and desire support in this task. Schools must provide this support by offering sex education at all grades at levels appropriate to the ages of the students.

Not only must we teach our children at levels appropriate to their age about the functions of sexual organs, contraception, pregnancy, childbirth and sexually transmitted diseases, but we must also seek to foster sexual self-love and respect, teach the right to one's own body. We must emphasize that sexual equality, self-respect and respect of one's partner and the mutual sharing of responsibility for the consequences of sexual intercourse are basic to full and healthy sexual experience. We must discuss relationships, the traditional roles of submission and dominance in female-male relations, the use of coercion,

power and force for self ends. We must discuss the violent, nonsexual nature of sexual assault and abuse and the effects and repercussions of these crimes.

At upper grade levels there is room for frank discussion on the difference between pornography and erotica. Power abuse themes in the name of sexual entertainment must be addressed. The difference between the celebration of sexual experience between equals and the defamation and dehumanization of sexuality using any type of power abuse must be explored.

Federal incentives

The federal government must encourage this form of sex education by providing the provinces with various incentives.

For example:

- a) Health and Welfare Canada should develop resource material such as kits, booklets, and pamphlets to be widely distributed for public and school education.
- b) Grant-giving departments such as Secretary of State and Health and Welfare Canada should develop programs to finance projects seeking to develop such material, or to do further research on pornography. Such research could include : a profile of pornography consumers and the reasons for porn consumption; the effects of pornography; the analysis of regular consumption of pornography, especially violent pornography, as a symptom of suppressed male rage against women and the finding of positive ways to defuse that rage.
- c) Arts-funding departments and councils must put monies into projects seeking to develop a feminist aesthetic, to produce positive images of women, female sexuality and sexuality in general.

Legislative and Legal Action

What do we do now while we initiate the long-term solutions of education, discussion, research and positive image creation? We must regulate this product porn as we would any other.

In our discussion on the effects of pornography, we showed that pornography as a ubiquitously displayed, ubiquitously available product hurts children and hurts women. This harm ranges from the psychological (adversely affecting their perceptions of themselves, sexuality, women, men, and female-male relationships) to the physical (making them, because of the adverse effects it has on some men, targets of violence). Just as we recognize, for example, that too much chemical waste carries potential harm to the environment and therefore set pollution standards, we, as a responsible society, must recognize the adverse effects of pornography and attempt to regulate the product in such a manner as to minimize its potential to provoke physical harm. Such regulation ranges from using Criminal Code provisions to municipal by-laws.

Criminal Code

Legal means must exist to remove the worst pornography - the most blatantly anti-women and anti-child pornographic representations - as it has been demonstrated to cause harm in various ways to women and children. As the Charter of Rights and Freedoms states, freedom of expression and freedom of the press are "subject only to reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free democratic society". Absolute freedom of expression does not exist in our society. Pornography clearly impinges on the rights of women and children to security and to the very basic unwritten right to self.

With regards to obscenity we recommend:

a) that section 159.(8) read:

For the purposes of this Act, any matter or thing is obscene where a part thereof is the exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty, through degrading representations of a male or female person or in any other matter.

b) that degradation be qualified as any representation having one or more of the following elements which could be taken to be advocated or endorsed:

i) one or more participants in the matter or thing are coerced overtly or implicitly into participation in a sexual, violent, cruel or horrific act;

ii) one or more participants are injured or abused physically, psychologically or verbally;

iii) where an imbalance of power is obvious or implied by virtue of the immature age of the participant(s) or by other contextual aspects of the representations.

c) that a clause be added to section 159 stating that any matter or thing may be obscene whether or not any acts or circumstances depicted or described have been simulated.

- d) that the new subsection 159.(9) be added to the Criminal Code as proposed, i.e.:

Where a court convicts a person of an offence under this section, it shall make an order declaring the matter or thing by means of or in relation to which the offence was committed forfeited to her Majesty in right of the province in which the proceedings took place, for disposal as the Attorney General may direct.

- e) that in section 163.(1) the word "theater" be substituted with "public or private place" because "theater" is too limiting.
- f) that similarly in section 163.(2) the word "theater" be replaced by "public or private place".
- g) that it be noted in section 163 that provincial film classification boards be empowered to recommend to the Attorney General that a film or video tape is pornographic - obscene as defined in subsection 158.9 - and for it to be prosecuted.
- h) that the new section 163.1 be added to the Criminal Code as proposed, i.e.:

163.1 Where any film or videotape is presented, published or shown in accordance with the classification or rating established for films or videotapes pursuant to the law of the province in which the film or videotape is presented, published or shown, no proceedings shall be instituted under section 159 or 163 in respect of such presentation, publication or showing or in respect of the possession of the film or videotape for any such purpose without personal consent of the Attorney General.

- i) that section 165 be repealed and the following be substituted:

165.1 Everyone who commits an offence under Section 159, 162, 163.1 or 164 is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for five years.

165.2. Everyone who commits an offence under section 161 or 163.2 is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Rationale for change:

those making the substantially larger profits on pornography are the producers and distributors, not the participants; a summary conviction is therefore no deterrent to them.

With regard to children and the production, possession and dissemination of obscene material - as defined in the amended 159.(8) - we recommend:

- a) that the use of children (persons under 18) in the production of obscene materials be a criminal offence;
- b) that possession of such materials using children be a criminal offence;
- c) that the sale or distribution of obscene material to children be a specific criminal offence;
- d) that the sale or distribution of obscene material in which an adult is posed or dressed to look like a child be a criminal offence.

With regard to hate literature and the Criminal Code we recommend that:

- a) subsection 281.1(4) be amended so that the identification of an "identifiable group" be expanded to "colour, race, religion, ethnic group, sex or sexual orientation"
- b) that "willfully" be removed from subsection 281.2 (2)
- c) that, as Jillian Ridington proposes, a new subsection be added:¹²

281.1(3) Everyone who, by communicating statements or distributing publications or other materials, advocates or promotes sexual aggression is guilty of an indictable offence.

Broadcasting

Because the airways are public domain, it must be ensured that they do not violate public interests.

We recommend the following amendments be incorporated into section 3 of the Broadcasting Act:

- that the right to freedom of expression and the right to receive programming over the airways, only as limited by the laws and regulations generally applied, is uncontested, but all persons authorized to transmit programming are responsible for the programs they broadcast.
- no station, network operator or pay television licensee shall broadcast any abusive comment or abusive pictorial representation on any race, religion, creed or sex.

Re: Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission
We recommend:

- a) that in licensing broadcasters, the CRTC stipulate that they not broadcast material which is degrading to women, in accordance with the Report of the Task Force on Sex-Role Stereotyping in the Broadcasting Media and its proposed recommendations on pornography;
- b) that the CRTC take steps to ensure that satellite programming received in Canada abide by the Canadian broadcasting standards and the Criminal Code regarding obscenity.

The N. B. Human Rights Code

We recommend that section 6 of the N.B. Human Rights Code be expanded to read:

- 6(1) No person shall
- a) publish, display, or cause to be published or displayed, or
 - b) permit to be published or displayed on lands or premises, in a newspaper, through a television or radio broadcasting station, or by means of any other medium that he owns or controls

any notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation indicating discrimination or an intention to discriminate against, or likely to inspire negative attitudes towards, or to condone violence towards, any person or class of persons for any purpose because of race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, physical disability, marital status or sex.

N.B. Attorney General's Office

We recommend that N.B. Attorney General's office develop guidelines for evaluating the illegality of pornographic material based on this definition of pornography:

Pornography is a presentation or representation whether live, simulated, verbal, pictorial, filmed, videotaped or otherwise represented, of sexual behavior in which one or more participants are coerced overtly, or implicitly, into participation; or are injured or abused physically or psychologically; or in which an imbalance of power is obvious, or implied by virtue of the immature age of any participant or by contextual aspects of the presentation, and in which such behaviour can be taken to be advocated or endorsed.

Provincial Regulation

As all material containing a or several pornographic elements will not fall under the proposed Criminal Code obscenity laws, we recommend:

- a) that establishments who wish to sell pornographic or "adult" material be specially licensed and that monies collected from those license sales be channelled into sex education and social programs.
- b) that the N.B. Film Classification Board be empowered to classify all videos for sale or rent in the province.
- c) that the N.B. Film Classification Board add the elements of pornography to its criteria for classification (the advocacy or endorsement of: objectification, degradation, power imbalance and abuse, victim masochism, abuser sadism as sexual titillation).

Municipal Regulation

We recommend that municipalities stipulate in by-laws that all stores selling pornographic material be required to place it at least 1.5 meters off the ground and behind an opaque barrier allowing only the titles to be shown.

Prostitution

As the issue of prostitution is not a priority concern of New Brunswick women, the N.B. ACSW has not studied the issue in depth nor taken a position on it. We note, however, the existence of three movements regarding the approach to problems associated with prostitution-related activities: (1) criminalization (2) legalization (3) decriminalization.

In the first category, criminalization, the prostitute risks punishment for certain behavior, such as pressing and persistent soliciting. In recognition of the fact that prostitution involves a transaction between two people, groups have recommended and the Justice Minister in his recent omnibus bill has proposed that the client of the prostitute also risk punishment for soliciting services.

In the second category, legalization, the state regulates the profession. Law enforcement becomes easier; health standards are improved; prostitutes no longer work the streets; tax revenues are increased; the prostitute's self-image is improved; the need for pimps are reduced. However, in legalizing prostitution-related activities through licensing and regulation, the State in fact plays the role of pimp, institutionalizes a profession which, at least in part, is a product of a society based on sexual inequality and sexual exploitation - and condones those negative aspects. Furthermore, law enforcement of some sort would have to continue with regards to prostitution; the licensing of child prostitution, for example, would be utterly unthinkable.

The third category, decriminalization, approaches most closely a feminist perspective of the issues. Such a view accepts the prostitute-client transaction as one occurring between two consenting adults and therefore requires the repealing of present laws governing prostitution-related activities. Problems associated with prostitution would then fall under general law

(some Criminal Code provisions ¹³, provincial landlord and tenant and nuisance laws, and, if necessary, new municipal by-laws).

While the decriminalization position is the most acceptable to feminists - neither condoning nor specifically condemning prostitution-related activities, it does pose potential problems. Empowering municipalities with the option of drawing up their own soliciting by-laws for prostitutes would create a nonuniform approach to the problem. Some cities would become very strict; others would remain more lax - simply forcing the moving of prostitutes from one city to another, creating the further concentration of prostitution-related activities and problems.

We view the present outcry against soliciting as one stemming more from a concern for city cosmetics than about the social problems that are forcing more prostitutes into the streets, more prostitutes into certain areas, and more women and increasingly children into such work. Essentially cities are at arms against poor prostitutes - the ones forced more and more to the streets. In the whole outcry, the more comfortable prostitutes, call girls, for example, are never mentioned.

All the soliciting by-laws in the world will not change the fact that most of our poor are women, that most poor single parent families are headed by women, that women's salaries are 60% that of men's, and that for many women prostitution is their only financial alternative, or a better financial alternative than their "legitimate" job skills will allow. Nor will those by-laws change the fact that over 60% of prostitutes were physically and sexually abused as children, that many witnessed the abuse of their mothers by their fathers, that therefore many fall into prostitution because of self-hating, self-destructive feelings.¹⁴

We recognize that society is highly ambivalent towards prostitution. On the one hand are those making the moral judgment that the selling of one's body is inherently wrong. Society indirectly supports this view through its present laws on punishment for certain prostitution-related activities. On the other hand, there are those who view prostitution as serving a social need, and prostitutes as persons choosing their profession out of their own free will.

These polarized views do not allow for thoughtful examination of the social reasons which have created this work. Until these reasons are studied and addresssed, until society offers women a better financial deal in other professions, prostitution-related problems will continue, and will burgeon in economically hard times.

Conclusion

In this brief, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women has taken the position that education is the long-term solution to curbing the production of and demand for pornography. As a society we must understand that pornography is a product of a sexually anxious, sexually confused, sexually repressed society, of a society that publically has largely only defined sexuality in male terms, of a society based on sexual inequality. As actively and widely as pornography miseducates, we must educate.

As much as a revised obscenity law and legislative reforms are necessary to state society's disapprobation of pornography, these measures remain mere stopgaps. Sex education at all grades in the schools and public education on the difference between pornography and erotica must be offered; a feminist aesthetic and positive images of female sexuality must be developed, nurtured and widely disseminated.

The N.B. ACSW believes that problems associated with prostitution will never be resolved by specific Criminal Code provisions nor by municipal by-laws. Prostitutes are victims of a society which ineffectively deals with the emotional trauma child sexual abuse, child physical abuse and wife assault have on the child, of a society where women are still struggling for a just economic deal. Society's facing and effectively dealing with and counteracting the abuses, social injustices and economic inequities which create the conditions for young women to fall into prostitution, and society's active counteracting of the male social conditioning which perpetuates the demand for prostitutes are the only real long-term solutions.

A mark of true freedom, a statement of sexual equality, a real step in social progress, will only shine when the demand for pornography and the demand for prostitutes shrink.

We hope it is not utopian to believe that as sexual inequality, like misogyny, one day even that demand can die.

Footnotes

1. Jillian Ridington, Freedom From Harm or Freedom of Speech? A Feminist Perspective on the Regulation of Pornography, (Ottawa: 1983), p.1.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. In 1982-83, English Chatelaine, itself, had a circulation in Canada 29 times that of Playgirl; French and English Chatelaine, a circulation 67 times that of Playgirl; Playboy and Penthouse a combined circulation 15 times that of Playgirl. (Statistics calculated from Audit Bureau of Circulations statistic sheets.) Also see "Playgirl ferrets out hunks of the north", Globe and Mail, February 2, 1984.
5. Edward Donnerstein and Daniel Linz, "Sexual Violence in the Media: Toward a Desensitization to Rape?", University of Wisconsin.
6. Ibid., pp 3-4.
7. Susan Griffin as quoted in Jillian Ridington's article (op.cit.), p. 12.
8. Lise Dunnigan as quoted in Mémoire présenté par la Fédération des femmes du Québec au Sous-comité sur les émissions à tendances sexuelles abusives du Comité permanent des communications et de la culture, p. 5.
9. Ridington, op. cit., pp. 15-18.
10. Ibid., p. 30.
11. See, for example, W.A. Belson, Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy, (Teakfield: 1978); and, J. McIntyre and J.J. Teevan "Television violence and deviant behaviour", T.V. and Social Behaviour, Vol. 3, Washington, D.C.: 1972.
12. Op. cit., p.44.
13. Soliciting could be covered by such Criminal Code provisions as those regarding causing a disturbance [s. 171 (1) (a)], loitering and obstructing others [s. 171 (1) (c)], disturbing the peace [s. 171 (1) (d)] and trespassing at night (s.173). Rewording these provisions may be required to ensure their effectiveness in controlling street soliciting.
14. See discussion of studies done on prostitutes' backgrounds in Pornography and Prostitution, Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women, pp.33-35.

Appendix

- Discussion of nude dancing entertainment

The push to allow nude dancing entertainment has become a contentious issue in New Brunswick. Essentially a right to increase profit and a right to "freedom of expression" movement is advocating this form of entertainment. Opposing it are those arguing that social and moral problems are part and parcel of the establishment of nude dancing entertainment, (that it causes increases in general crime rates, prostitution-related activities, sexually-transmitted disease, sexual assault, wife assault, child abuse, drug abuse, family breakdown etc.). In the debate a feminist analysis of the "entertainment" itself has been largely ignored.

A feminist analysis clearly demonstrates that this entertainment is pornographic. Firstly, the dancer is objectified: her body, more precisely her sexual organs are present solely for the male voyeur (spectator). Unlike a true stage dancer, the nude entertainment dancer is not on stage to express or celebrate with her self for her audience the complex intertwining of inner and outer sensation, of body, mind and soul, but is present merely to reveal her breasts and genitalia. So being, she becomes in essence for the voyeurs those body parts. Her body is thus degraded, reduced as it is from a whole body (encompassing both the spiritual and the physical, the inside and the outside) to male-valued body parts. The performance is not a celebration of sexuality but a parceling of female organs for visual male feasting.

Secondly, a flagrant power imbalance exists between dancer and spectator. The dancers are nude or seminude (therefore vulnerable) before a fully clothed audience. The dancers are few - one or two - before many. The dancers are female, often young, before a largely male audience, with all the negative connotations of inequality that imbalance signifies in our society.

Rendered an object possessing body parts, downgraded from full human status, on the "weak" side of the contextual power imbalance, the nude dancer is prey to verbal abuse and harassment. The spectator, on the more powerful side of the power imbalance, may easily fall into the abuser role, using verbal abuse - catcalls, comments and other harassment, which may continue later outside the entertainment establishment if the abuser is removed. Such abuse, when it does occur, further downgrades the status, emphasizes the diminished status, in the voyeur's eyes of the nude dancer.

Labelling such entertainment as erotic makes a mockery of our humanity. The presentation is cold and mechanical; there is no mutual exchange, nor supposed to be any, of attraction, sensation, joy. Between strangers and unequals, the object and the voyeurs, the presentation reduces any notion of sexuality to a robot-like display of genitalia. Participant objectification, participant degradation, and power imbalance and abuse are basic to this men's entertainment, and the very fact that it is labelled "entertainment" attests to its promoters' and profiteers' advocacy or endorsement of the presentation.

In allowing such entertainment, a municipality condones the profiting from events which celebrate the inequality of the sexes, and the degradation of the female body (by rendering it a mere object of men's pleasure). Municipalities can react. They can, for example, pass by-laws disallowing entertainment which profits from presentations that objectify and degrade the human body.

However, this tactic will not ensure a uniform dealing with the problem, and areas outside of the municipal jurisdictions would be subject to no regulation whatsoever. Most effective would be provincial legislation based on a feminist analysis of live pornographic entertainment to disallow such entertainment.

Select Bibliography

- Atwood, Margaret, "Atwood on Pornography", Chatelaine, September, 1983.
- Audit Bureau of Circulations, Canadian Circulation of U.S. Magazines 1983, and statistical summary sheets.
- Barlow, Maudie, Document de travail: La pornographie et la liberté d'expression, Ottawa, mars 1983.
- Brownmiller, Susan, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975.
- Burstyn, Varda, "Violence, Masculinity, & Profit: A Look At The Mass-Entertainment Media", Canadian Woman Studies, Vol 4 No. 4, Summer/August, 1983.
- Callwood, June, "Living in a permanent state of suppressed rage", Globe and Mail, Thursday, May 8, 1984.
"Porn law: a delicate problem", Globe and Mail, October 13, 1983.
- Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography, Position Paper-Federal Initiatives, Ottawa, 1984.
- Clark, Lorene, M.G., Pornography, a brief presented on behalf of The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, March 7, 1978.
- Comité contre la pornographie à Gatineau, Manifeste du Comité contre la pornographie à Gatineau, novembre 1982.
- Donnerstein, Edward and Linz, Daniel, Sexual Violence in the Media: Toward a Desensitization to Rape?, University of Wisconsin, unpublished document, received from Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography, 1983.
- Dudar, Helen, "America Discovers Child Pornography", Ms., August, 1977.
- Fédération des femmes du Québec, Mémoire présenté par la Fédération des femmes du Québec au Sous-comité sur les émissions à tendances sexuelles abusives du Comité permanent des communications et de la culture, novembre 1983.
- Helwig, David, "The Case Against Skin Mags", Quest, March, 1982.
- Kreps, Bonnie, "The Case Against Pornography", Homemaker's, June, 1982.
- Law Reform Commission of Canada, Criminal Law: Obscenity, December, 1972.

- Lederer, Laura, editor, L'Envers de la nuit: les femmes contre la pornographie, Montréal: Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1983.
- Malamuth, Neil, M., and Donnerstein, Ed, "The Effects of Aggressive-Pornographic Mass Media Stimuli", Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, vol. 15, 1982.
- Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Information on Pornography, 1983.
- Maynard, Fredelle, "The Girl Child as Sex Object", Chatelaine, June, 1982.
- McCormack, Thelma, "Understanding Pornography", Canadian Women Studies, Vol. 4, No. 4. Summer/August, 1983.
- Morgan, Robin, "How to Run the Pornographers Out of Town (and Preserve the First Amendment)", Ms., November, 1978.
- Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Pornography and Prostitution, April 1984.
- Ridington, Jillian, Freedom From Harm or Freedom of Speech? A Feminist Perspective on the Regulation of Pornography, Ottawa: National Association of Women and the Law, February, 1983.
"Pornography: What does the new research say?", Status of Women News, Toronto, July, 1983.
- Robertson, Jennifer, Pornography and its Effects: A Survey of Recent Literature, Ontario Status of Women Council, Toronto, 1979.
- Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, Pornography and Prostitution: Issues Paper, Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1983.
- Steinem, Gloria, "Erotica and Pornography: A Clear and Present Difference", Ms., November, 1978.
- "Is Child Pornography...About Sex?", Ms., August, 1977.

